

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended herein. Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Applicants have amended the title of the invention as requested by the Examiner.

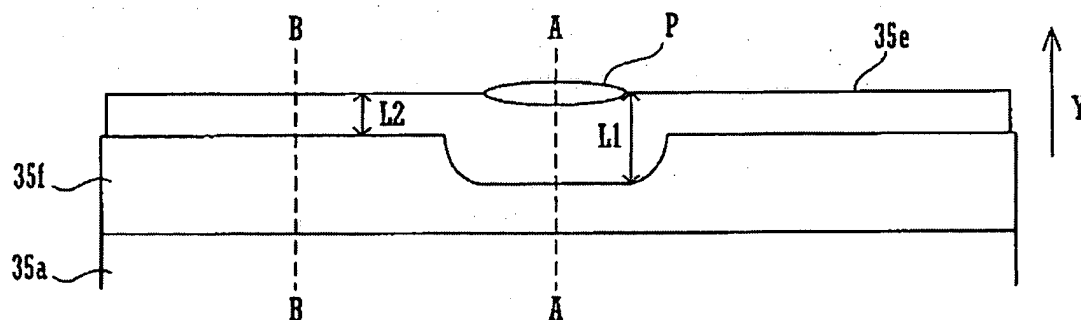
I. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the allowance of claims 6-11.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-3 UNDER 35 USC §102(b)

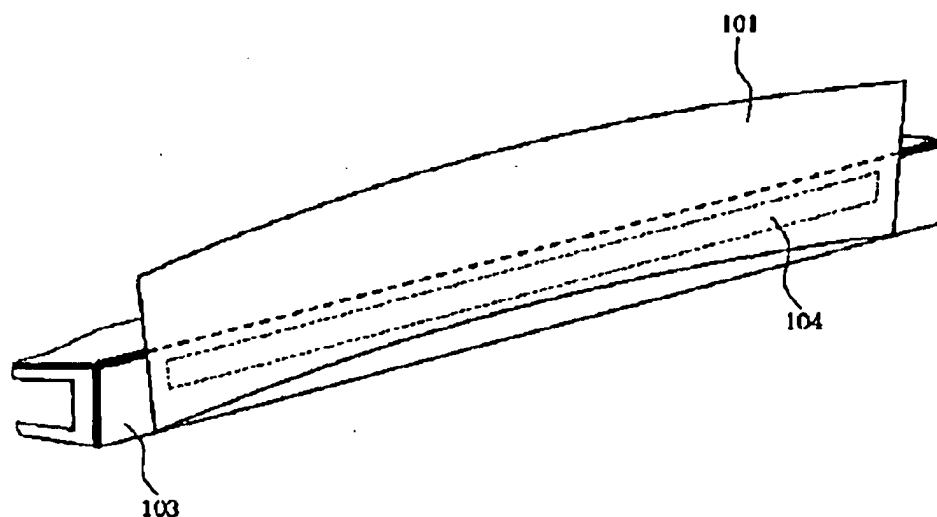
Claims 1-3 presently stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) based on *Kurihara*. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 refers to a cleaning device in which the toner catching sheet has a free length that is determined by an amount of paper dust buildup on the outer circumferential portion of the image bearing member in the lengthwise direction. Moreover, claim 1 as amended emphasizes how the second end portion of the toner catching sheet is itself parallel in the axial direction if the image bearing member to which it abuts.



For example, Fig. 3 of the present application (reproduced above) illustrates the manner in which the second end portion 35e is parallel in the axial direction if the image bearing member (not shown) to which it abuts. This ensures that the cleaning unit 35 completely collects paper dust (e.g., P), and so on, which may be scraped by the cleaning blade 35c.

Kurihara:



In contrast, *Kurihara* teaches a scooping sheet 101 in which the entire second end portion of the scooping sheet 101 does not completely abut an outer circumferential portion of the image bearing member. As is shown in Fig. 9 reproduced above, the end portion of the scooping sheet 101 is curved and thus not parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member (not shown) as recited in claim 1. Consequently, this prevents the scooping sheet from completely collecting paper dust and residual toner, which are scraped off by a cleaning blade 30.

More specifically, the scooping sheet 101 in *Kurihara* is applied initially to a fixing member 103 which is in a curved state. The fixing member 103 is then released once the scooping sheet 101 has been fixed thereto as represented in Fig. 9 (reproduced above). As is shown in Fig. 9, the resultant end portion of the scooping sheet 101 is not parallel but rather curved. Because the curved end portion

is not parallel in the direction of the image bearing member as recited in claim 1, the scooping sheet 101 is unable to completely collect the paper dust and residual toner.

Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the cleaning device of claim 1 is neither taught nor rendered obvious in view of the teachings of *Kurihara*. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 4 AND 5 UNDER 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 4 and 5 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(b) based on *Kurihara* in view of *Kaji* and *Reference B*, respectively. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Claims 4 and 5 depend from claim 1, and therefore may be distinguished over the teachings of *Kurihara* for at least the same reasons expressed above. *Kaji* and *Reference B*, respectively, have not been found to make up for the above-discussed deficiencies in *Kurihara*.

IV. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, all claims 1-11 are believed to be allowable and the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Application No.: 10/595,249

Should a petition for an extension of time be necessary for the timely reply to the outstanding Office Action (or if such a petition has been made and an additional extension is necessary), petition is hereby made and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees (including additional claim fees) to Deposit Account No. 18-0988.

Respectfully submitted,

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